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LETTER DATED 27 OCTOBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 26 October 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahhaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, calling attention to the continuing poor performance of United Nations agencies in implementing that part of the oil-for-food programme that relates to Iraq's three northern governorates (Irbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah) and urging you to prevail upon the agencies in question to improve their performance, given that this situation can no longer be tolerated.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 26 October 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I refer to our letter dated 23 July 1998 (S/1998/689, annex), in which we communicated to you the comments of the Government of Iraq on the poor performance of the United Nations agencies in implementing those parts of the procurement and distribution plans for phases I, II and III that related to the country's three northern governorates, namely Irbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah. I regret to have to inform you once again that, despite the promises that steps would be taken to improve the agencies' performance and despite the many meetings held by the Executive Director of the Iraq Programme with the directors of the offices maintained by the executing agencies in the governorates in question during his visit to Iraq from 22 June to 3 July 1998, there has been no notable change in the standard of performance and no increase in rates of implementation.

We have studied your periodic report on the first 90 days of phase IV, submitted to the Security Council on 1 September 1998 pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 1153 (1998) (S/1998/823), and, in particular, its part IV, section B, entitled "Programme implementation in Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah". The figures and statistics given on the rates of implementation achieved for those parts of the procurement and distribution plans that relate to the three northern governorates only confirm the comments that we made in our aforementioned letter and have discussed on various occasions with you, with representatives of the Iraq Programme in the Secretariat and with the officials of the agencies themselves.

In order to clarify the picture with respect to the situation of implementation in the three northern governorates, the rates of implementation achieved by the agencies there, by sector, over the 22 months and more of all three phases thus far and as given in your aforesaid report, are set out hereunder.

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| Medical equipment and supplies | 38 per cent |
| Water and sanitation facilities | 26 per cent |
| Electricity | 2 per cent |
| Agriculture | 34 per cent |
| Education | 20 per cent |
| Rehabilitation of settlements | 20 per cent |
| Mine clearance | 68 per cent |

Rates of implementation for phase IV, which has already been under way for more than four months, are not given in your report. The rates reported by the United Nations agencies themselves are as follows:

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|---|---|
| Medical equipment and supplies | 0 per cent |
| Water and sanitation facilities | 0 per cent |
| Electricity | 0 per cent |
| Agriculture | 0 per cent |
| Education | 0 per cent |
| Rehabilitation of settlements | 3.7 per cent |
| Mine clearance | 0 per cent |

The level of implementation for phase IV in general is thus 0.1 per cent.

Not only do these embarrassing figures for rates of implementation prompt concern but they also raise many serious questions concerning the ability of the United Nations agencies to continue to implement a programme on this scale despite the availability of all the financial resources for which provision is made in resolution 1153 (1998) and previous resolutions, despite the mobilization of hundreds of international and local personnel and despite the preferential treatment given by the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) to the processing of contracts submitted by the agencies, which have not been obstructed, delayed or placed on hold throughout the period in question. This situation has led to cases of misuse of Iraqi funds allocated to the three northern governorates and has caused the programme to fail to achieve its declared objective of mitigating the suffering of our people in these governorates.

In bringing all of these facts to your attention, the Government of Iraq urges you once more, in the light of your direct responsibility under the provisions of the memorandum of understanding, to take all necessary measures to prevail upon the United Nations agencies to improve their performance and step up the pace of implementation of the procurement and distribution plans in such a way as to ensure sound, effective and rapid execution and to take due account of the declared humanitarian objectives of the oil-for-food programme, given that the present situation can no longer be tolerated.

As I await whatever measures you may take, I request you to have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq

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